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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES  
NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY**

*HIV/AIDS is the number one cause of death for African-American women ages 25 to 34*

(RICHMOND, Va.)—The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will join organizations across the nation on Feb. 7 to recognize National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. This observation is a national community mobilization effort designed to increase awareness, participation and support for HIV/AIDS prevention, diagnosis, care and treatment among African-Americans. AIDS service organizations, community-based organizations and local health departments across the Commonwealth will sponsor special testing events and educational programs in observation of this event.

The sixth annual observance is aimed at motivating African-Americans to:

- Get educated about the transmission modes of HIV/AIDS
- Get involved in their local communities
- Get tested to know their HIV status
- Get treated if they are living with HIV or are newly diagnosed.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2003, African-Americans accounted for 50 percent of the estimated new HIV/AIDS diagnoses in the United States. Also in 2003, 172,278 African-Americans were living with AIDS in the United States.

In 2004, VDH estimates that African-Americans accounted for 62 percent of the reported HIV cases in Virginia. At the end of 2004, there were an estimated 10,200 African-Americans reported to be living with HIV or AIDS in Virginia.

“The HIV/AIDS epidemic is disproportionately affecting African-Americans,” said Casey W. Riley, director of VDH’s Division of Disease Prevention. “National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day should serve as a call to action for African-Americans, and individuals of all races, to get tested for HIV and educate themselves on the behaviors that put them at risk.”

The VDH Division of Disease Prevention supports local health departments and other medical providers in the prevention, surveillance and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. It offers confidential counseling and referral services through its HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Hotline. It also provides HIV/STD testing and partner counseling, and medications for the treatment of Virginians living with HIV/AIDS.

For more information about HIV/AIDS, test sites and other sexually transmitted diseases, contact the HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Hotline at (800) 533-4148 or visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/std](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/std). You can also visit the Web site to view a list of statewide activities commemorating National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Events are subject to change.

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